



THE GRANGE NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 48

February, 1991

A Word From Our Chairman

Welcome Spring - well, I think it is coming!

An unfortunate accident took place last week when the 1840's Argand lamp chimney was broken. I know that the historic interpreter was only changing the light bulb but I must remind you that this is the duty of The Grange Housekeeping and Artifact Care Committee only. This is not the duty of an historic interpreter! It is easy enough when one is a faithful interpreter here in The Grange to forget that this is a museum and most of the artifacts irreplaceable. PLEASE, please, as little touching of the artifacts as possible and do not lean on the tables!

If a light bulb needs changing or anything else - please leave a note on the Chairman's desk with the problem and the date - (it may already be in the process of being fixed).

Many thanks.

GRANGE VOLUNTEER ENRICHMENT, TRAINING & TOURS

Florence Watts, our Volunteer Training Chairman, puts a great deal of thought and effort into devising interesting and enriching experiences for our professional development as "historic interpreters". Will everyone mark their calendars for the following:

Saturday, February 16. IMPERATIVE FOR NEW VOLUNTEERS!!

9:30 - 12:30

Basic training course for new volunteers (and anyone else who may feel there are some gaps in their Grange and Boulton understanding).

March Mini-Tours

- Beat the winter blahs! Come on a visit with your Grange associates to interesting Toronto sites with historic associations. Watch The Grange bulletin Board for details as they become available. Monday, March 11 and Monday March 25.

Monday, April 8.
10:30 am.

Pleasance Crawford, our resident horticultural expert, on The Grange garden, past, present and future.

Monday, May 13.

Grange Annual Bus Trip. This year we will be exploring historic sites in the Peterborough area. Our annual expeditions are always delightful, and not to be missed.



FOLLOW-UP TO TINA BATES' PRESENTATION, DOMESTIC OFFICES AND THEIR FUNCTIONS, AT THE GRANGE VOLUNTEER TRAINING SESSION, NOVEMBER 12, 1990.

During the question period after Tina Bates' talk, there were two questions to which she was unable to give adequate answers, but promised to send along the information later. It has now arrived - all you ever wanted to know about "bath brick" and "sad irons".

Cleaning knives and forks

One activity traditionally associated with the cellar was the cleaning of knives and forks. The blades of knives and tines of forks in the 1840's were not made out of stainless steel, as today, and were easily stained and rusted. Cleaning and polishing brightened and sharpened them. It also prevented them from becoming pitted and damaged.

Cleaning them was a regular and important function, requiring its own space and furniture. One Kingston inventory included a "table for cleaning knives."

After use at the dining table, knives and forks were washed in water, carefully keeping the ivory, silver, ebony or horn handles dry. They would then be sent to the cellar probably in a knife box for further cleaning.

Knives were cleaned with brick dust on a knife board. The "bath brick" was made from a preparation of earth, high in calcium carbonate, made into the shape of a brick. The knife board was a long wooden board usually of pine, 5 to 6 feet in length. At one end was a small box to contain the bath brick. Sometimes the board was covered with buck leather, which was easier on the blades when cleaning.

Forks were cleaned by rubbing their backs on the board, and then rubbed between the prongs with a small piece of pine wood, shaped like a knife blade and covered with leather and then brick dust. Another method was to plunge them into a deep box or keg of sand.

Source of the term "sad-iron"

Oxford dictionary says "sad" is ancient word meaning solid, dense, compact, massive, heavy. An 1840's domestic encyclopedia says they still call heavy objects "sad" in the North of England, where the pressing irons were made.

SPRING LUNCHEON/LECTURES AT THE GRANGE

Three explorations of "The World of William Henry Boulton" will be presented on Thursday, February 7, April 4 and April 18. Complete details of topics and speakers will be found on the last page of this Newsletter. It is hoped that all volunteers will make EVERY effort to attend these events. Not only do they raise funds for the day to day operations of The Grange, but they are a pleasant and painless way of increasing our knowledge and understanding of the period we represent at The Grange. AND - the lunch is always delicious!



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AND DON'T MISS LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR SIMCOE'S VISIT TO THE GRANGE!

On Thursday, February 21, at 2:00 pm., The Grange will be honoured by a visit from the famous founder of our city, and everyone is invited. For more information, please see second last page of this Newsletter.

FALL FAIRS AND THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

As Lieutenant Governor Simcoe will be visiting The Grange, it is an appropriate time to mention one of his less known contributions to Ontario life - the fall fair. While he was Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada, Simcoe donated 10 guineas to the establishment of the Agricultural Society of Upper Canada, paving the way for the more than 200 agricultural fairs that now operate in Ontario. The first fall fair was held in Newark (now Niagara on the Lake) in 1792, the year before York was founded, and by the 1830's and 40's agricultural fairs had sprung up across the colony. In 1845, the first provincial fair was held in Toronto, and that fair eventually evolved into the Canadian National Exhibition.

NEW FACES AT THE GRANGE

Margaret Greaves - Monday. Isabel Wedgwood and Mary Justine deMerindol - Thursday, and Judith Emery - Friday.

Welcome aboard, ladies! We hope that you will get a great deal of pleasure and satisfaction from your work at The Grange.

SICK LIST

We are pleased to report that although Joe Erdle is still in Sunnybrook, he is steadily improving.

Joan Stoicheff - Saturday. A victim of a severe attack of arthritis. Joan is a long time Grange interpreter, and we miss her very much.

A NOTE FROM MARY ASH, GRANGE LIBRARIAN

Mary Ash has been dipping into Sandra Gwyn's fascinating book "The Private Capital: Ambition and Love in the Age of Macdonald and Laurier", and has come across a couple of excerpts which she thinks are of particular interest to Grange volunteers. The first describes a table setting in the 1880's at the home of the Meredith Family on Rosedale Road in Toronto:

"About twenty-four ... could be counted on to sit down at the table that not only had been extended to its full length but with the aid of trestles and extra leaves made into an enormous dinner table. We had some really good Irish linen tablecloths. The lighting was by candles, and the napkins were properly arranged with the regulation thick square quarter-slice of bread tucked in..."



The second is an account of a garden party at The Grange given in honour of the Governor General and his wife, Lord and Lady Aberdeen:

"It was all very funny." So Lady Aberdeen, not normally a great one for irony, described her single social coup as Governess General. The day was Monday, August 23, 1897; the setting not Ottawa, but Toronto. The scene was a lavish garden party at the handsome Georgian manor house, The Grange, arranged in the Aberdeens' honour by the Sage of The Grange himself, Professor Goldwin Smith. "On the lawn, near the rosaries were spread generous buffets with dainty fare," reported Saturday Night's Lady Gay. "In front of the library windows sat the Highlanders' Band, playing capitally.... At precisely half-past five, Their Excellencies drove up in an open landau, the only carriage permitted onto the grounds."

In venturing in through those gates, the Aberdeens were carrying the banner of Empire deep into enemy country. Goldwin Smith, author of the "sub-arctic lumber village" crack about Ottawa, was the most ardent advocate of Canada's annexation by the United States to be found in the nation. An old Etonian, a former Regius Professor of History at Oxford turned leisured man of letters, Smith had fetched up in Toronto in 1871, later to marry fortune in the form of a Family Compact widow and to become, even in that citadel of Toryism, the most prominent figure in society. (An approximate contemporary parallel would have been the late Kenneth Clark choosing to settle in, say, Regina.) Torontonians, as Saturday Night's editor, Hector Charlesworth, once noted, "thrust Smith into the limelight on every possible occasion." They read, or at least they bought, his books. They repeated his anecdotes. They marvelled at how he beat them at whist. They fought for invitations to the dinner parties he gave for visiting luminaries like Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, creator of Sherlock Holmes, and the singer Madame Albani. Young ladies flocked to his Thursday afternoon lectures on English literature; afterwards, Mrs. Smith poured tea and there might even be tennis. "Thus is applied the antidote," noted Saturday Night, "to prevent any fear lest so unusual an exercise of their mental powers should turn into bluestockings so many of Toronto's brightest flowers."

From The Grange, when not engaged in the social round, Smith ridiculed the Office of the Governor General, much as he had once ridiculed Ottawa. "As useless, but as capable of giving harm as the appendix." Now, on this sunlit Jubilee Summer afternoon, as so often has happened before and since to staunch republicans when actually confronted by royalty, Smith melted as butter in the sun. "On the doorstep, hat in hand," marvelled Lady Aberdeen. "All the time ready to fetch anyone we wanted to speak to."

With a flourish, Smith got out The Grange's most treasured antiques, the famous Lord Simcoe wineglasses finished with a cutglass ball at the end of the stem instead of a base, so that they had to be drained at a single draught. Nothing would do but he and Lord Aberdeen must drink the Queen's health from them. "Who would have thought the day would come?" the Countess continued in her diary. "It is a curious fact that the man who has been preaching annexation, should also be the man to receive us in the most absolute royal manner, every point of etiquette being most formally observed."

THERE IS NO NEW THING UNDER THE SUN (Ecclesiastes Ch. 1 v. 9) OR POLLUTION IN TORONTO HARBOUR

Until 1825, the population of York was less than 2,000 and pollution of the Bay was not a serious problem. But waves of immigration in the late 1820's had caused the population to mushroom, and by the mid-1830's there were 9,000 people living in York. In 1832, Francis Collins, the crusading editor of "The Canadian Freeman", was moved to write an exposé on York's water. Expressing the very modern sentiment that "nothing is more conducive to health than good water", he described the Bay as a "horrible stagnant pool with an evil stench". During the winter, people dumped garbage in the Bay, "all the filth of the town heaped on the ice to sink when the thaw sets in". Yet, even though cholera was a constant visitor to the town, many people did not seem to realize how deadly their drinking water could be. The local authorities tried to pass regulations controlling the dumping in the Bay, but York was not a city yet, and they lacked the power to take drastic action. The next year, 1834, York became the city of Toronto, and the municipal government was in a stronger position to enforce jurisdiction. Garbage collection was established, and tax laws were passed to pay for much needed improvements. Sad to say, it was too late for Francis Collins. He died that year of cholera, and was buried in a swampy corner of St. James's Cathedral Cemetery.

TORONTO HISTORICAL BOARD

We now have a large supply of the Toronto Historical Board's handsome folder on the sites maintained by them in the city. These are very useful hand-outs for visitors expressing interest in other historic houses, and a supply will be kept at the front desk.

Incidentally, to celebrate Heritage Week, admission will be free to all Toronto Historical Board properties on February 16, 17 and 18.

QUETTON ST. GEORGE SAWING IN WASHAGO??

Whilst on holiday this summer Grange volunteer Elizabeth Chish came across some local lore that roused her curiosity.

According to area records, the first major sawmill at Washago was built in 1853 by Quetton St. George. Now, as all good Grange historians know, this name means the very successful merchant and French expatriate associated with the town of York in the early 1800's, and builder of the first brick house there. (You see it in The Grange introductory video). But what was he doing in Washago in 1853? A visit to The Grange library, and Scadding's "Toronto of Old" solved the mystery. M. Laurent Quetton St. George returned to France in 1815 when the disruptions caused by the French Revolution had subsided.



He never returned to Upper Canada, but maintained commercial interests there until his death in 1821. It was his son who eventually returned to the new world to take care of the properties acquired by his father and it must be this son who is remembered in the ~~annals~~ of Washago.

LIBRARY

There was an informal volunteer training session in the library on January 21. The three speakers, Margaret Machell, Ann O'Brian and Anne Mills, were a fund of information, especially in their stories of the history and restoration of the library.

There is now a list of The Grange tapes that can be borrowed. The tapes, list and the sign-out sheet are in Peggy's office. There is also a list, both on the notice board in the volunteers' lounge and in the library, of books on the volunteer shelf that can be borrowed (no more craning your neck to see the titles on the spines). The list and sign-out sheet are in a marked black binder on the volunteer shelf. There are also more copies of the Privileged Few for borrowing. However, please remember that these books are just on loan!! If any more are "lost" - we will not be allowed to remove them from the library!

HELP!

Some books are missing from the library and we would dearly love to have them back. If any of the following are in your possession please, please, return them.

Consuming Passions. Ontario Historical Society (not yet even catalogued)

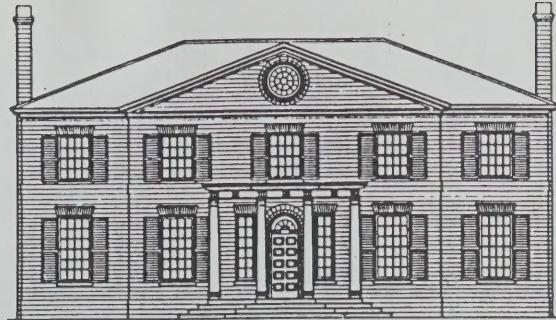
A Gentlewoman in Upper Canada: the Journals of Anne Langton (volunteer shelf).

Costumes of Household Servants from the Middle Ages to 1900 by Phyllis Cunningham.

Manners and Morals in the Age of Optimism 1848-1914 by James Lane.

It is possible that the last three books are out of print, hence difficult (and expensive) to replace, so it is imperative that they be returned.

Ann Molesworth.



THE GRANGE SPRING LUNCHEON LECTURES

Place: The Grange Music Room

Time: 11:00 am

Tickets: \$10 each or \$25 for the series (includes lunch)
To reserve call 977-0414, ext. 237

Thursday, February 7 *"Clothes Make the Man...and youth...and child"*

Alan Sudden, a founding member of the Costume Society of Ontario and collector of period clothing will discuss, with illustrations, the wardrobe of a gentleman like William Henry Boulton, from birth to death, from outside to inside.

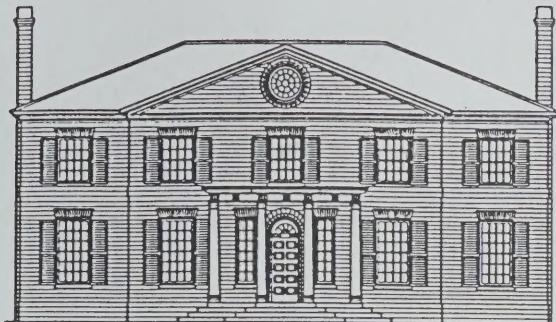
Thursday, April 4 *"Gentleman or Rogue" - William Henry Boulton 1812-1874*

Renée Benn, Grange historical researcher will give us an in-depth portrait of the last Boulton to live in The Grange. William Henry Boulton is probably one of the most colourful and controversial figures in Toronto's political history. Described as "a gentle and amiable gentleman" in private life, in his public life as alderman, member of parliament, and four-time mayor of Toronto, he was abrasive and belligerent, thriving in the rough and tumble world of 19th century politics.

Thursday, April 18 *Architecture and Furniture in William Henry Boulton's Toronto*

Elizabeth Ingolfsrud, contributing editor, Century Home Magazine, will share her extensive knowledge of design and architecture with us in an illustrated talk. By mid-century the classical symmetry of Georgian design was gradually being replaced by picturesque Regency and Romantic Gothic Revival. The increased population and prosperity stimulated the buying of furniture, and gave an impetus to the development of local manufacturers.

Entrance to The Grange is through Grange Park, behind the AGO



LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR SIMCOE FINALLY VISITS THE GRANGE

Many of the important players on Toronto's early social and political scene were entertained by the Boultons at The Grange but not our city's founder, Lt. Governor Simcoe. His term of office in Upper Canada had ended before The Grange was built. However, on Thursday, 21 February at 2:00 pm, this will be rectified when the Lt. Governor (in the person of his alter ego, CBC broadcaster Joe Cote) comes to drink tea and talk to us about his adventures.

Joe Cote has steeped himself in the life and work of Simcoe, and is well-known for his spirited interpretation of our famous founder. Following his presentation, an elegant tea will be served in a manner which would meet with the approval of Mrs. Simcoe.

Tea with
Lt. Governor Simcoe.

Thursday, 21 February

2:00 pm

Tickets: \$15
To Reserve, call 977-0414, ext. 237

Entrance to The Grange is through Grange Park, behind the AGO

